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KnowingUnknowing and the Corporeal. [Artefact]

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## ***Stains upon the Silence***

‘And then what about silence itself, is it not still waiting for its musician?’<sup>1</sup>

The music on this CD spans a period of thirty-seven years—almost four decades, which fall within an epoch that has come to be known broadly as postmodernism; and thus I think it would be helpful to consider this music, and then to listen to it, in light of postmodernism’s influencing pressures. 1990, the date of one of the works on this CD (*Sonata a niente*), was historical in the sense that it not only initiated a *fin-de-siècle* decade that would usher in the end of a millennium, it also saw the erosion or delegitimization of many long established axes of authority and absolutism. The end of the 1990s witnessed the disintegration of distinct and powerful political foundations such as Communism, Thatcherism and Apartheid, to mention just three. The movement known as postmodernism, which had percolated throughout the 1970s and which had undergone various renovations by the ‘90s, nurtured numerous political, social and aesthetic shifts that led to a wide diversity of peripheral theories and evolutions. Under the influence of postmodernism, the arts, like many other disciplines of thought, were defined by an increased fragmentation and disharmony of coherent, dominant voices and styles (accompanied, one might add, by an expanding variety of previously silenced ones); an emergent eclecticism that progressively undermined distinctions between high and low aesthetics; and a keen amalgamation of incongruous syntaxes and methods into a *bricolage* of creative modes. At the core of this artistic turn was, among other things, a rejection of hermeneutic depth in lieu of what Fredric Jameson has described as ‘contrived depthlessness’.

Furthermore, as we observe the impact of postmodernism throughout the 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see that the decline of meta-narratives and meta-theories is paralleled by technology’s increasing power to collapse the actual physical world and erode distinctions of discrete spatial and temporal paradigms. Exponential developments in technology—radio, then television, then the Internet; and more recently, the emergence and proliferation of the mobile digital ecosystem—have brought cultural-creative practices from both the past and from distant regions into our immediate lives in a ‘stitched-together collage of equi-important and simultaneously existing phenomena, largely divorced from geography and material history.’<sup>2</sup> From an aesthetic perspective, it is easy to see how this phenomenon has undermined a lived sense of history, and historical time and space, and how it has readily embraced juxtaposition and *mélange*. As images and sounds from around the world are ubiquitously experienced through screens and earphones, it is not surprising that surface has become a central feature of the postmodern aesthetic.

In the following, I situate the featured works on this recording in relation to the dominant elements of postmodernity discussed above. Paul Hayes, the most senior of those represented here, is a contemporary of Irish composers more likely to be categorized (by themselves in some cases) as modernist—John Buckley, Frank Corcoran, Raymond Deane, Roger Doyle and Jane O’Leary among others. But Hayes’s music (like that of Gerald Barry) always stood out from theirs for what some might call its postmodern quirkiness. For my own part, my cautious admiration (from a retrospective position) of the modernist project is matched by a natural distrust of some fashionable postmodernisms of which I have been a contemporary witness. I find myself in the precarious position of being something of a late modernist (neomodernist?) who is nonetheless exposed to ever-changing postmodernist weather. *KnowingUnknowing* is a gently prescribed study in free improvisation utilizing prepared guitar and bowing techniques that not only undermines assumptions concerning the instrument itself but also asks questions regarding accepted etiquettes of musical semantics; it thus reflects how my work as a postmodernist free-improviser has infiltrated into my (generally) modernist stance as a notating composer—both practices have become increasingly entwined. The other

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<sup>1</sup> The Letters of Samuel Beckett Vol 2: p. 477 (to Edouard Coester).

<sup>2</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1990), 61.

composers featured on this recording, David Fennessy, Judith Ring and Peter Moran, may be considered direct heirs to the postmodern episode having emerged as creative artists during the early years of the new century.

Like most categorizations, however, those mentioned here run a hazardous risk of promoting reductive and thus diminished profiles of all the highly distinctive composers mentioned above. That said, an observation of the degree to which the various pieces on this recording resonate with, or deviate from, the defining tropes of such categories may be very useful in cultivating a deeper understanding of them. In this historic moment where long established musical orthodoxies have become detached from their moorings, notions of style, technique, aesthetics, philosophy, and so on, can increasingly be seen as reflections of individual perspectives rather than a collective consensus. A frustrated interviewer once said to Derrida, 'To read you, one has to have read Derrida!' I find this an amusing notion, but it is also true that this dilemma reflects, to a large degree, the challenge that listeners of contemporary music face in many cases today—to understand Fennessy, one has to have heard Fennessy. In the postmodern moment, few composers write music based on defined, stable and ideologically circumscribed tenets, as was generally the case in past epochs. The challenge today is less even about gaining familiarity with an array of musical dialects, but rather with grasping a mounting proliferation of musical idiolects. While certain traits may be shared, today, many composers create not only new, individual, autonomous languages but also unusual and innovative means and modalities of articulating them. This predicament challenges listeners as much as interpreters; and it is hoped that a reflection on the distinct musical idiolects heard in this recording within the context of larger cultural apparatuses will contribute towards a better appreciation of them.

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Composed in 2005, David Fennessy's *Security Blanket* occupies a strange and beautiful space. This quality derives from the feeling that it conceals more than it exposes. From a structural and tonal point of view, it has all the hallmarks of a typical postmodern declaration. It shares many general features of postmodernity in its immediate communicativeness, its tonal referencing, its predisposition for quasi-pastiche and in its harnessing of ubiquitous schemata (melody, accompaniment, scale repetition, and even chordal modulation of a 'reminiscent' sort). Its slow, meditative and repetitive figurations are evocative of some of the more ambient minimalists. Its compartmentalized, non-linear design rejects the developmental structures inherited from 19<sup>th</sup>-century, motivic-led musical aesthetics—moods are established only to be cut off suddenly by pregnant silences or 'jump cuts' to apparently unrelated material. On paper at least, *Security Blanket* displays that surface quality so revered by the postmodernists—what you see is what you get. It appears to emulate that flatness of texture that rejects so-called 'deep' structures; there are no hidden levels of meaning—postmodern art, it is argued, tells all it needs to tell in its reflective surfaces. However, more is at play here, and a number of compositional procedures employed in *Security Blanket* force us to consider alternative readings of the work. Despite its apparent IKEA-like, flat-pack structure exemplary of postmodern artforms, a number of carefully handled procedures, forms and techniques such as an unusual employment of cyclical structures, tempo shifts and tempo modulation, and microtonal scordatura (the virtual re-construction of the instrument into two microtonal and registrally distant regions) expose complex processes at play within this piece that push against simple categorizations.

As mentioned, a prominent structural feature of *Security Blanket* is the application of specific types of cyclic structures—the repetition of numerous sections that recur at subsequent stages. A central trait of these repeated sections, however, is that while rhythmic and figurative characteristics remain recognizable, they rarely reappear in exactly the same way in terms of tonality and tempo. In this sense, what we hear preserves the memory rather than the detail of what we have heard, and we thus become slowly aware, through listening, through performing, that the work engages in a type of bidirectional exchange throughout its duration. As a result, the discrete sectionalized moments of the work do not hold time within themselves; their intersectional connectivity creates a non-developmental synchronicity, a kind of temporal infolding, as opposed to unfolding; conflict and resolution reside within a unified and

coterminous temporality circling like a Möbius strip—a notion textually rendered in Joyce's (Stephen Dedalus's) ruminations: 'that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be.'<sup>3</sup>

This rejection of motif-driven, temporal procedures in preference to a series of interconnected, temporally looping and thus ahistorical *moments musicaux* is further enhanced by Fennessy's strategic use of variable tempi. Tempo shifting and tempo modulation do not merely apply to the cyclical processes mentioned above,<sup>4</sup> they are significant structural elements running throughout the work. Indeed, tempo modulation is one of the first observable traits of *Security Blanket*, which we hear at the very opening when a series of repeated chords is subjected to subtle (occasionally abrupt) accelerations and decelerations of tempo. Tempo shifting is also applied to entire sections. One such section in repeated triplet figurations,<sup>5</sup> for example, is to be performed at dotted crotchet = 120; when the same section returns at a later point in the score<sup>6</sup>, its tonal alteration is accompanied by an instruction to perform dotted crotchet = 160. Memory of the first version still resides but is distorted by microtonal modification and temporal manipulation.

A different type of tempo modulation is employed in various sections. In one, midway through the work,<sup>7</sup> the music is divided between repeated chords in a high register (crotchet = 90) and repeated chords in a low register (crotchet = 72). This sectionalizing of repeating chords (whose antecedents, to my ears, stem from Romanticism) sets up a type of antiphonal relation, a responsorial interplay. However, the constantly alternating tempi have the phenomenological affect of making the lower, slower and responding set of repeated chords sound like (Schubertian?) nostalgic remembrances of, or reflections upon, the initial higher, faster set. Another use of shifting tempi pervades *Security Blanket* to significant effect. The employment of repetitive accompaniment notes (often two microtonal versions of the same note played on different strings so that they resonate over each other thereby adding a further blurring effect) is ubiquitous. However, their organization into a variety of semiquaver, triplet, quintuplet, sextuplet, septuplet and demisemiquaver groupings, constantly shifting in complex sequences, has a profound effect on the metre's reception. Cumulatively, the impact of the extensive employment of tempo shift and tempo modulation adds to the general process of creating depth in the musical discourse in which memory forges a coterminous relation to time, which constantly fluctuates in an elastic extension and contraction.

Fennessy's use of microtonality is a major feature of the work but it emerged as much out of pragmatic concerns as it did aesthetic ones. By his own admission, he always had a difficult relationship with the guitar. As a student classical guitarist, both the instrument's uneven repertoire and his own shifting, perhaps ambivalent attitude to it created blocks to composing for it.

My relationship to the guitar, and especially classical guitar, is complicated. I once held ambitions of a career as a performer but tendonitis during my studies put an end to those. Not only that, my interest in the standard repertoire of classical guitar music was already waning after two years of undergraduate study; and it is true that I was not a diligent practiser—I was never interested in attaining the skills of the virtuoso, even in my previous life as an electric guitarist.<sup>8</sup>

In order to find a compositional approach that would not be handcuffed to his own technical limitations or to the habit of pre-learned patterns, Fennessy devised methods of 'de-familiarization' in relation to his instrument. This was achieved by reconstructing the guitar into two separate though related instruments.

<sup>3</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 291.

<sup>4</sup> By tempo shift I mean the use of different tempi for discrete sections or phrases; tempo modulation refers to slow but perceivable increases or decreases of tempo over a period of time within a given section.

<sup>5</sup> Bars 91-131.

<sup>6</sup> Bars 190-273.

<sup>7</sup> Bars 157-189.

<sup>8</sup> This quotation is taken from an email correspondence with David Fennessy conducted on 14 August 2017. All further quotations are taken from this source until otherwise stated.

When it came to composing *Security Blanket*, I had to borrow an instrument and grow my nails again; and before too long, there I was confronted by my own limitations as a guitarist once again, lapsing into those configurations that fell under my fingers. In order to make the instrument somehow alien to me, or to impose limitations that meant I couldn't fall into familiar tropes, I chose to approach the guitar as two separate but deeply connected instruments. Therefore, *Security Blanket* can be seen as a duo for a high instrument with nylon strings and a low instrument with steel-wound strings. To highlight these distinct sound worlds, I chose to have the two instruments tuned somewhere between an eighth and a quartertone apart.

This binary fracturing of the instrument's material into 'high-guitar' and 'low-guitar' music is assisted by the finely tuned scordatura that Fennessy devises for the piece. The arrangement into two registral planes and two microtonal regions creates peculiar harmonic colours that give the work its nuanced and multi-dimensional quality. Retained traditional vernaculars are thus transformed into strangely mysterious and somewhat alien soundworlds. Fennessy further extracts the binary principal from the juxtaposition of the identifiable and the strange, the habitual and the unknown:

On a certain level, the piece occupies a fragile place between the familiar, somewhat soothing tropes of guitar music (strummed chords, simple arpeggios, melody with bass accompaniment) and a less stable and ambiguous world of the microtonal tuning system.

Furthermore, because these discrete tonalities are blurred by the scordatura, they invoke a sort of sound-time deformation, a type of aural geodetic effect that bends the perception of past and present into a state of continuous interchangeability; perceptions of a teleological trajectory in the music are thus subtly (though profoundly) diminished. From a phenomenologically-orientated perspective, such 'reinterpretations' of previously heard sections, the constant destabilization of tempo, the superimposition of past and present by way of microtonal blurring, all impress upon the listening experience a sense of nostalgia; or some vague sense of remembrance of loss; or a strangely introspective and unresolved solace (hence its comforting if somewhat ambivalent title); in short, they carve out subjunctive depths within the work for us to experience something other than the superficial emissions of a reflective surface. Magically, while ultimately representative of most of postmodernism's formal concerns, *Security Blanket* refutes postmodernism's abandonment of depth.

Additionally, the sectional, fragmentary characteristic of the music does not prevent Fennessy from creating a slow-burn rise of tension in the work. Indeed, his strategic placing of incongruous materials side by side creates a friction that slowly though exponentially increases in an anxiety that ultimately detonates the piece's dramatic denouement near the end of the work. As he explains,

ambiguity is further reflected in a formal approach that eschews an easy, linear narrative. I had amassed a certain amount of 'riffs', which I treated almost as 'found objects' and sought a technique to arrange them in such a way that the tension afforded by the differences of tuning and timbre between the two instruments would slowly bubble to the surface and ultimately become the dominant element of the music. It reaches a kind of unbearable threshold, which gives way to the forceful strummed music of the penultimate section.

While some sort of climax is long anticipated, the explosive frenzy of the aggressive strumming that occurs exceeds expectations; it surpasses in volume and raucousness<sup>9</sup> anything that has come before it. Despite this release of pent-up tension, the work does not sell out to bland tonal resolution. Its final slow cadential section peters out; but its music is bereft of a reassuring tonal closure; instead, it empties into an uncertain silence and lingering sense of unease.

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Originally written for psaltery and tape, Peter Moran and Judith Ring jointly composed *Anois 's Arís* in 2009 (Ring conceived the tape part). The version for guitar was created at my request

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<sup>9</sup> The instruction at this point states: 'raucous'.

and premiered at the City Assembly House, Dublin (Irish Georgian Society) on 26 March 2015. In response to a further request by me for a 'sister' piece to *Anois 's Arís*, Moran composed *Enharmonic Harmonics* (also with tape) in 2016, which was premiered at the SOUNDScape Festival in Maccagno, Italy, on 3 July that year. Both works are based on microtonal scales derived from ancient Greek music systems (the subject of Moran's PhD research). Ring created the tape for *Anois 's Arís* from samples of recordings of the psalter, which were subjected to techniques of splicing and layering. The result is a fascinating mix—a contemporary deconstruction of an ancient instrument. Its string sounds splinter into overlapping shards that bend microtonally. The tape predominantly acts as a resonator, offering sonic echoes and reflections of the semi-improvised microtonal material performed by the guitarist; though occasionally it overwhelms the sound palette in luscious, overlapping sound slices and rain-stick whishes. Both *Anois 's Arís* and *Enharmonic Harmonics* exploit the instrument's capacity for harmonics, natural and artificial. The latter is built upon a combination of a Greek-type scale known as the 'enharmonic genus' and the natural harmonics of the guitar (though the microtonal scordatura presents these harmonics in unusual sonic renderings). Of the two works, *Anois 's Arís* offers more extensive opportunities for improvisation. Both magically combine elements of the antediluvian (Greek scalic systems) and the contemporary (electronic tape parts) explored in conjunction with the performance practices of improvisation and extended techniques characteristic of contemporary music contexts.

These works thus represent evidence of the current cultural dynamic that is the result of a network of overlapping influences, identities, practices, traditions, technologies and orientations that has become the contemporary composer's economy of creative practice. Moran is fully conscious of his position within this eclectic economy, as is made blatantly clear by his wide-ranging response when I ask him whether he composes Irish music, or whether his music is simply composed by an Irish person:

It is usually not my intention to express my 'Irishness' through my music (except for the occasional Irish-language title, or the very rare reference to traditional Irish music). Geography, however, has played a role. My attitude towards music for children, for example, was certainly shaped by a British tradition that includes organizations like CoMA and composers like John Paynter, Bernard Rands, John White, Peter Maxwell Davies and Cornelius Cardew. And from other directions, many American composers were key influences in how I thought about microtones (Harry Partch, Ben Johnston, Kyle Gann), and improvisation (John Cage, John Zorn). There are also numerous references and homages in my work to American and Canadian jazz musicians (Thelonious Monk, Oscar Peterson), folk singers and groups (Nick Drake, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young), hip-hop groups (Niggaz Wit Attitudes, Beastie Boys), and pop and rock bands (King Crimson, Billy Joel, Jamiroquai).

It is clear from this rather catholic inventory of aesthetic, cultural and technical influences that composers of the younger generation such as Moran are working within an unstable cultural context: an aesthetic landscape where the established canon (Irish, European, Western) no longer holds sway; where the very notion of authorship, of *auctoritas*, has been substantially delegitimized.

As I have shown, there are many elements in *Anois 's Arís* and *Enharmonic Harmonics* that provide ample evidence of this artistic turn but Moran's loosening of his hold on strict authorship stands out as a central characteristic. The fact that the former is a jointly composed work with Judith Ring testifies to this most evidently. But more specifically, it is the invitation to the performer of Moran's works to improvise to a considerable degree that points to such a re-assessment of authorship. The aleatoric systems of notation employed promote the fundamentally performative condition of music in lieu of an exclusively theory-informed organization of pitches and rhythms that would act, in Adorno's words, as a 'crystallization of the creative impulse'. In this regard, Moran's scores provide open, multi-centred notations and graphics that somewhat emasculate what might be termed the intentionality of the author. In this regard he sustains Barthes' theory regarding the so-called 'death of the author': 'To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the

writing.<sup>10</sup> This loosening of authorial control likely emerges from the fact that Moran is both guitarist and composer, and where the composer releases the reins, the player takes hold of them. For the guitarist-composer, the previously segregated categories of author and interpreter become blurred.

*Anois 's Arís* was written right in the middle of my PhD research into microtonality and tuning systems. While my microtonal work up to that point had been quite systematic in its approach, *Anois 's Arís* was a refreshing break for me, where I felt comfortable enough with my new musical language to skip all the maths and the ratios and just tune the instrument by ear until I got the intervals I wanted, and then simply improvise with it. Improvisation has always been a central part of my practice.

In preferencing open, improvised procedures over determinate compositional methods in these guitar works, Moran displays a distinctive postmodern inclination for aesthetics over ethics. In both works, an emersion in the improvised, sensuous, almost soporific world of microtonality (especially when ethereally rendered through hallucinatory harmonics) takes precedence over a demonstration of control established by rigorous schema dictating content, formal structure, and indeed, interpretative scope. In this regard, his process of composition rejects the authoritative principles and connoisseurship upon which the foundation of the canon traditionally depends. This is not to suggest that his music lacks rigour or forethought—Moran's external freedom is matched only by his internal focus—but that, as a composer who works from outside established compositional and cultural orthodoxies, Moran's aesthetic approach is more interested in questions than in answers.

...my musical philosophy is driven by exploration and experimentation, which is to say I tend to write about the things that I don't yet understand, and I come to understand them better by composing music about them. That's what drove me towards microtonality, but that's also what drove me towards gamelan (including etude-like pieces for specific instruments within the gamelan), and towards miniatures, and audience-participation pieces, and so on, all the way back to my earliest available work, which was written for a solo speaking voice exploring the rhythms of the English language.

*Anois 's Arís* and *Enharmonic Harmonics* display Moran at ease with the world; his reach extends geographically beyond Ireland, aesthetically beyond Western orientations and temporally beyond the present; it extends back to harness ancient Greek tuning systems and reaches forward to re-conjure them within technological and freely improvised settings that distill a magical soundworld both fluid and still.

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Silence is golden, beautiful; why not let's make it an aesthetic goal.<sup>11</sup>

The four guitar pieces in this recording by Paul Hayes represent all he has written thus far for the instrument (though *Pre-Prelude for Morton Feldman 1926-1987* was originally composed for piano in 1987 and transcribed by me in 2015). The guitar version was premiered at the SOUNDscape festival in Maccagno, Italy, in 2016. *Non in fretta* was written in 1987 in response to the tragic death of our colleague Barry Lawler who was killed in a motor-cycle accident that year. *Sonata a niente* was composed for me in 1990 and premiered at the Mostly Modern Series (later MUSIC21) at the chapel of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in 1992. *Thirteen Little Things that Touch the Heart* was composed in 1984 and premiered by me during the Mostly Modern Festival at the Pepper Canister Church in Dublin in October 1992.

All these guitar works target silence as a central occupation. Indeed, it's hard not to think of Beckett as a salient model. Speaking of *Waiting for Godot*, its author suggested that 'silence is pouring into this play like water into a sinking ship.'<sup>12</sup> Hayes's works are formally constructed

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<sup>10</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' in *Image Music Text* (London, Fontana, 1977), 147.

<sup>11</sup> From an email correspondence with Paul Hayes conducted between 14 and 30 August 2017. All further quotations are from this source until otherwise stated.

<sup>12</sup> John Fletcher, *Samuel Beckett* (London, Faber & Faber, 2000), 52.

to allow for a similar absorption of silence, though they each achieve this in different ways. While *Non in Fretta* and *Pre-Prelude for Morton Feldman 1926-1987* share similar concerns to the two other longer works under consideration, they differ in that they are short, minimalist statements that function from start to finish under musically stable syntaxes—the former as a series of repetitive chords and figurations in the Reichian manner; the latter as a series of dyads (mostly comprising a fundamental and a harmonic), which radically abbreviates Feldman's lengthier canvasses. In both of these short works, silence does indeed pour into the music. '[In *Non in Fretta*] I was trying to express the inexpressible; the aftermath of a tragic event, an implosion of emotions suspended in the silence of death.' In *Pre-Prelude*, Hayes wanted 'to refine and re-refine sounds down to perfectly formed bubbles of pitches bursting and decaying into a thin tapestry of ephemeral airiness, silent and idle, yet profoundly "listening" all the time to the infinity of nothingness.' However, it is to the two longer works that we need to look to explore Hayes's more complex approach to composition as an attainment of silence.

In stark opposition to the two shorter works, *Sonata a niente* and *Thirteen Little Things that Touch the Heart* are the result of a much more unstable chemistry. In these works, Hayes's polystylistic palette and his deliberate disavowal of a rational narrative reject the monoaffective style finely honed by many of his Irish contemporaries such as John Buckley and Kevin O'Connell. One might like to suggest that the pieces emerge from a complex syncretism of eclectic and discarded residua, but synthesis is hardly the outcome. Situated side by side, these musical utterances (comprising quasi-quotations, unfinished musical ideas, fragments of dramatic contrast, parachuted moments of pastiche, and so on) interrupt and subvert each other. This melee does not only occur on a syntactical level but also on dynamic, registral and textural planes, so that the music constantly sparks and ignites on almost every level imaginable. At any given moment, one idea overrides the previous one, only to relinquish authority to the next. Often, these shifts grind like rough gear changes; the very process exposes an antithetical trait intrinsic to the overall musical construct. Or, to look at it from another perspective, this constant in-fighting means that the music escapes the subordinating hierarchy of syntax, which leads to a corresponding rupture between signified and signifier. The result is a strange asymmetricality and a destabilized syntax, a musical prose of anti-narration that never comes close to reassuring coalescence.

If there is a political analogy here, it is in the music's reluctance to organically morph into a hegemonic and thus hierarchized syntax. Even the least unassuming, incomplete phrases—the ragtime fragment that unexpectedly appears in *Sonata a niente* is exemplary here—get to have their say. However, while such language may model democratic and polysemous ideals, it would appear that the music's stunted eclecticism emerges more from its refusal to engage in a positivist ideology that believes in the outcome of its own teleological trajectory.

Is this a negative ontology? Such built-in dissolutions and fragmentations might indeed suggest that Hayes's music is at base negative, as it is predicated upon procedures designed to inflict apparently willful damage to syntax and coherence, which may very well suggest a Beckettian endgame. Despite the dynamic interrelationship between sound and silence, the exchange of sparring fragments never comes close to forming something holistic. One could be forgiven for thinking that the ultimate goal, perhaps the only goal, is renunciation—both the *Sonata* and *Thirteen Little Things* disintegrate into mere shards of sounds that subsequently flutter away into total silence. One could argue further that such abandonment of initially identifiable figurations of pitch and rhythm represents a failure of nerve. Seen in this light, the music, at best, shows evidence of compositional aporia, or, at worst, demonstrates an unforgivable abdication of creative responsibility. Both views would see Hayes as a composer bent on taking a *via negativa*. Despite these appearances, however, it seems that such acts of grammatical vandalism reflect an aesthetic credo shaped by private trauma rather than by any form of deliberate anarchism.

When I was young I had a stutter and I often think that this affected my music in a strangely positive way. It made me think in short bursts of sound. In my childhood, speech impediments were sometimes considered affectation in a child; something to be discouraged at all costs...I always feel that silences happen because I haven't said anything...My speech impediment,



therefore, has had a profound effect on me all my life, and it was possibly one of the reasons why I went to study music in the first instance...I do sectionalize my music; and I also enjoy composing for dance because in that way I can compartmentalize my ideas into a series of disjunct sounds...Like the photographic art of David Hockney, which I love, I feel my music is a series of shuttered fragmentations gently stuttering out into the aftermath of silence...

In this light, Hayes is more a postmodernist by necessity rather than by design. Additionally, there is an element to his music central to its material construction and aesthetic position that offers an altogether more positive perspective on his engagement with an ostensibly negative Derridean deconstruction. This is the notion of play. Describing his fragmentations as 'pieces of a puzzle scattered across a universal recreation ground', Hayes reinforces the importance of lightness and laughter: the ludic element in his music.

I put great emphasis on recreation in my work...Music itself is more recreational than literature and therefore the goal of silences in my music is more like metaphysical goalposts rather than an end in themselves. The silences represent going beyond the boundaries, of being 'out of play', more or less. If we think of musical philosophy as a 'game', then we start to understand how profoundly playful human endeavors, including music itself, really are. The silences in these pieces are not gimmicks; they are an internal part of the puzzle.

As noted, Beckettian resonances abound. Written in the same year as *Sonata a niente*, Hayes's Double Bass Concerto explores similar sonic apertures. The subtitle of the work, 'Stain upon the Silence', is taken from something Beckett once said in an interview: 'I had to do it, I had to leave these stains upon the silence.' 'The implication here,' Hayes adds, 'is that silence is a backdrop upon which we "paint" our impurities.' This relationship to silence often takes a structural form. Those *Thirteen Little Things that Touch the Heart* are in fact thirteen little silences that Hayes has carved out of his musical impurities—the intent here is of an ethical order, an invitation to meditate upon the act of listening:

In *Thirteen Little Things that Touch the Heart*, I thought of the beautiful magnetic power of music to draw us into silence and the piece is centered around thirteen 'silences' that define the structure of the work. Silence, here, is like an oasis for people to contemplate the way we listen to music.

Hayes's music therefore is one that strives to exist on a deeper order; as it were, *in vacuo*. It reaches towards a sub-auditory level provoking us to reassess the act listening itself, what is latent in the Latin form: *ausculto*—to wait for a sound, to pay attention to a sound.

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*KnowingUnknowing* is an improvised triptych for prepared guitar and dancer, which was developed over a period of about a year with Helen Kindred. The first section to be created was premiered at the Inside Out Festival on 23 October 2015 at Middlesex University, London. Following this, two more sections were added. While envisaged as a duo for improvised music and dance, *KnowingUnknowing* has evolved into new areas. Improviser-filmmaker Pete Gomes joined dancer and guitarist to create an improvised video of a studio performance of the work. The result is a unique film in which all three—guitarist, dancer and filmmaker—conjoin in a one-off improvised moment.

To discuss *KnowingUnknowing*, however, it is necessary to return to its original version as a music and dance collaboration with Kindred. The work emerged and grew out of a number of basic ideas that were discussed before any music or movement was created. These ideas materialized from a shared awareness of the challenges we faced in finding something really new to say through improvisation. This challenge was acutely problematized, we felt, by the paradoxical fact that we were both highly trained in our individual fields—me as a classical guitarist and composer, Kindred as a contemporary dancer and choreographer specializing in Bartenieff Fundamentals. How could we search for new and innovative music and dance gestures that would be free (as much as possible) from the potential hazards of habit and cliché? How might we find ways to escape the deeply embedded gestures, techniques, practices, conventions, patterns, knowledges and assumptions that result from the thousands

of hours of practice and study we both invested over the years as aspiring students and professional performers; not to mention our years of disciplined training in composition and choreography? It became very clear to us that some type of distancing from our tacit knowledges would be required if we were to offer something new in terms of music and gestural semantics. Thus, a number of concepts emerged that we felt provided useful starting points. Prominent among these was the idea of innocence, of a type of pre-consciousness. Once this fundamental idea was accepted, certain texts came to mind. The first was Ted Hughes's *Wodwo*.

What am I? Nosing here, turning leaves over  
Following a faint stain on the air to the river's edge  
I enter water. Who am I to split  
The glassy grain of water looking upward I see the bed  
Of the river above me upside down very clear  
What am I doing here in mid-air?...

The non-fixity of place and purpose here is salient. Yes, it is in water; but the *Wodwo* neither understands where it is: ('looking upward / I see the bed of the river above me...'), nor what its purpose really is: ('What am I?...what am I doing here in mid-air?'). And yet, the *Wodwo* continues with its 'aimless' journey seeking to discover through its 'nosing' what it might be. This notion of not quite knowing oneself seemed most apt to our task in hand. It was this *Wodwo* 'moment' that these words describe, this sense of still-unadulterated 'being'—what we came to call 'unconscious consciousness'—that offered us a space within which we felt improvised music and dance might, without premeditated effort, find renewed gestures that could lead towards something different. Beckett's text *Neither* offered an even greater insight into this delicate balance of consciousness and unconsciousness; and it allowed us to further explore, indeed experience, in less specific imagery, that fragile sense of tentative equilibrium between knowing and unknowing:

to and fro in shadow from inner to  
outershadow

from impenetrable self to impenetrable  
unself by way of neither

as between two lit refuges whose  
doors once neared gently close, once  
turned away from gently part again. ...

It was this attempt to reject the known—our embedded knowledges and technical skills—and occupy a state between 'impenetrable self' and 'impenetrable unself' that obviously led to the title whose inherent (though gentle) dichotomy sums up the challenge we presented to ourselves to nurture movement and music free, if at all possible, from deeply ingrained patterns and conventions. It soon became apparent that what we had come upon in Hughes's and Beckett's texts were not merely models for *KnowingUnknowing* in poetic form, but also a realization that we would need to open a space in our consciousness whereby such innocence might inhere. In this sense, *KnowingUnknowing* is not merely a title; it is a phenomenological aspiration towards a state of consciousness, of being, from which unconscious gestures might be initiated and harnessed to creative purpose. This search for a *tabula rasa* from which originary impulses might emanate—we understand this to be an aspiration rather than a necessarily attainable goal—transports the practice of free improvisation into a totally new hermeneutical field for us, one that has significant philosophical implications. It also initiated a process of considered study into the nature of free improvisation that I continue to explore through improvisation itself and through reflective consideration of the practice.

Having developed a starting point and a concept surrounding the notion an unconscious consciousness, we began to look at more technical means by which such freedom from tacit knowledges might be found. To this end, we developed a number of strategies of de-

familiarization.<sup>13</sup> For the first movement of *KnowingUnknowing*, we instigated a process that Kindred subsequently termed 'sight deficit'. In performance, we initiate *KnowingUnknowing* from this place of sight deficit, and from a mental state that attempts to inhabit an unconscious consciousness. By blindfolding ourselves, by closing down the sense of sight, we place ourselves into a state of discomfiture; a distinct sense of de-familiarization is immediate. However, the application of sight deficit forces us to enhance other modes of sensory perception, and this in turn provides possibilities to hear, play and move in ways that perhaps we may not have dreamt of had we had complete sight (which we take for granted as a fundamental tool in our technical and communicative apparatuses).

There are other processes I put in place as a means of further enhancing the required de-familiarization I felt necessary to recapture a kind of innocence—to undermine the deep knowledge my fingers have of the fret board. This is where the prepared guitar (first movement), the separation of hand coordination (second movement) and the use of a bow (third movement) act as applied strategies that place the guitarist in a new, de-familiarized relation with the instrument.

In the first movement, I interlace at the fifth fret a metre-long stick between the strings (over string 6, under string 5, over string 4, etc.). I similarly place a tuning fork over the rosette, this time under string 6, over string 5, under string 4, etc. The effect of applying these foreign bodies to the instrument is that the fret board gets divided into three smaller 'sub-fret boards',<sup>14</sup> each of which offers distinct sound worlds. This creates a series of different textures, timbres, tonal and microtonal possibilities depending upon which sub-fret board is being played. In the second movement, I further develop a technique I first explored in my *Étude No. 6* entitled *African Print*. This requires the left hand to pluck a series of repetitive chords (plucking off and then hammering on). As this technique does not require the right hand for the execution of its sound, it leaves that hand free to explore its own palette of sounds and noises. In the third movement, I play the guitar with a bow, placing the instrument, like a cello, in a vertical position held between my knees. Again, the use of the bow situates the guitar in totally new light. The plucked element—the most fundamental characteristic of the instrument—disappears, and a strange, new soundworld, somewhere between cello and guitar is opened up. My sense here is that these new guitar sounds released by the bow have always been there, but have at last been freed. In any case, this does not sound like any guitar we know.

These three applied strategies of de-familiarization require a totally different set of skills for which I have not been formally trained. In deconstructing the guitar through these strategies, a historical grip on the instrument is loosened; its socio-cultural histories are tremendously diminished—that Spain is not immediately conjured up remains a totally refreshing aspect for me. My relationship with the instrument is thus radically altered. What was previously known—by my fingers, hands, sight, body posture, musical intelligence—becomes unknown; an unstable relationship between me and my 'new' instrument(s) is forged. This new relationship obviously resonates not just with the title of the work but also with that sought-for innocence discussed earlier, which is the *raison d'être* of *KnowingUnknowing*.

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While I have positioned all the works featured on this recording within the context of postmodernity, it is clear that such a defining period has not exercised complete control over the distinct voices of these composers. Authorship has clearly come under pressure (Hayes, Moran), but it has not, finally, been erased. And whereas some works (*Security Blanket*, *Sonata a niente*, *Thirteen Little Things*, *KnowingUnknowing*) display rather characteristic postmodern tendencies (deconstruction, non-linear structures, *bricolage*, etc.), it is interesting to note that they also defy many fundamental tenets of that movement (surface, superficiality, flatness).

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<sup>13</sup> These are not dissimilar to methods of de-familiarization employed by Fennessy, which I have discussed above (as a trained classical guitarist, he too was seeking formal and technical methods by which he might escape his own habits of cliché).

<sup>14</sup> This is, in fact, increased to four, as I also pluck the strings between the nut and the tuning pegs.

It is also interesting to note that all the composers featured here are guitarists of varying degrees of proficiency. While some may be more competent than others, a close relationship between composer and instrument is apparent in all the music heard here. It might very well be this fact that provides a feature that unites all the works—a reach towards silence. Every piece in this CD shares an unusual teleological unfolding towards silence—every piece ends in an ever-decreasing soundworld that ultimately peters out into nothingness. It is impossible to know for sure, but perhaps this is the result of an unconscious influence the guitar itself has had on each composer. As Julian Bream has insightfully pointed out, ‘There is no decrescendo in music like the dying of a plucked string, no more perfect death.’<sup>15</sup> Regardless of whether death has been a theme in these works or not, the ‘dying of a plucked string’ has infiltrated into all the featured works here. That strange desire to unfold towards ‘*a niente...*’ has infected the music; and thus one is brought back to the Beckett quote that opens this essay: ‘And then what about silence itself, is it not still waiting for its musician?’ All the pieces on this recording tell us that silence is both precedent and subsequent to the composer and the performer, who merely stain it, momentarily.

Benjamin Dwyer

### ***KnowingUnknowing and the Corporeal***

For me, the process of developing *KnowingUnknowing* brought to the surface a number of nuanced opportunities in relation to my perception of *self* as a dancer-improviser, as the work foregrounds questions of embodied knowledge. From an improvised movement perspective, *KnowingUnknowing* presents an exploration of the embodied self—a fluid combination of mind, body and reflective thought—and prompts questions regarding the self’s relationship with environments, the Other and time-space.

A key concept that emerged early in the process of developing *KnowingUnknowing* was one of innocence, the desire to move within something of a pre-conscious state of being. I questioned how I might *unknow* my trained-dancing body in order to reveal a renewed innocence in movement. The initial exploration of innocence, enhanced by Ted Hughes’s text, *Wodwo*, and other writings by Samuel Beckett (see Benjamin Dwyer’s essay), led us to aspire towards a state of what myself and Dwyer termed ‘unconscious consciousness’. I felt this state held me in balance between the knowing body and my desire to move away from that knowledge. This hovering, liminal state between consciousness and a sought-for pre-conscious body-mind, experienced through improvisation, prompted a new type of exploration of movement in relation to environment.

The state of unconscious consciousness can be seen to correlate with somatic-based movement practices that use sensorial awareness and internal mapping techniques as a way of connecting the mind-body such as Body-Mind Centering, Skinner Releasing, Feldenkrais, and Bartenieff Fundamentals, to offer some examples.<sup>16</sup> It is Bartenieff Fundamentals from which my movement practice draws; and from this foundation I developed a series of strategies of de-familiarization, which allowed me to experience states of heightened sensorial awareness. The first of these strategies, evident in the opening section of *KnowingUnknowing*, is the use of a blindfold. By blocking sight, I sought paradoxically to heighten other modes of perceptive and sensorial awareness. Further strategies employed in the latter sections of the work sought to recognize and disrupt some of the conventions of my classical-contemporary dance training: altering my relationship with gravity, further destabilizing my sense of spatial

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<sup>15</sup> Julian Bream, cited in Malcolm Welter, ‘A Conversation with Julian Bream’, *Guitar Review* 37 (1972): 12.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Fraleigh, ed., *Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations Through Dance, Yoga, and Touch* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015). Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay, *Body Space and Image*. (London: Random House, 1990). Andrea Olsen, *The Place of Dance: A Somatic Guide to Dancing and Dance Making* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014).

awareness, and seeking something of a corporeal unknowing.

The possibilities for sensorial awareness within Bartenieff Fundamentals lie in the preparatory work with the breath. Deprived of my sense of sight, I tune into the pulse and sensation of my breath, which de-familiarizes me from conscious, externally perceived movement. By wearing a blindfold, I am forced into new territories, new modes of exploring my body in relation to my perceptual experience of space and environment (sound, olfactory sense, space, Other, etc.). Bringing attention to the body through the breath, I attend to this primary, internal movement through which the body is mapped and located. Without sight, I am forced to rely on a continuous internalized sensing of my movements beneath my skin, and to become acutely conscious of their form and patterns from within. This allows me to *un-do* some of the habits of my dance training and explore anew my body-self in space and sound. Furthermore, my use of sight deficit recalibrates my awareness of Dwyer's music through deepened, more attentive listening. In *KnowingUnknowing*, I prepare, I tune, I sense and I listen; in short, 'I arrive behind my eyes'.<sup>17</sup>

My awareness of my body, space and the environment through deepened multi-sensory listening informs the choices I make in the moment of improvising, offering and responding in relation to the gestures in sound that co-produce the environment throughout the three sections of *KnowingUnknowing*. For me, the process of heightening sensorial awareness in the first section establishes the conditions for moving from an unconscious consciousness into new or altered type of movement vocabulary. It creates space for the interplay between 'inner connectivity' and 'outer expressivity' that underpins the philosophy of Bartenieff Fundamentals.<sup>18</sup> As I allow a heightened sense of awareness of my body-self and my environment, I relinquish some control of my conscious, pre-patterned, dancing body. It is then that I am able to listen. This innate listening allows an internal visualization of the breath in my body, and of my body in relation to sound. It is the relationship between these perceptions of inner and outer experiences that create the space-environment, as we perform together. I am able to deepen my connection to Dwyer's improvisations, through a multi-sensorial experience within and beyond my skin. Working with processes of de-familiarization as a strategy, and Bartenieff Fundamentals as a methodology, I am able to navigate the journey with Dwyer (and later with the improvising camera of Pete Gomes, as a third creative element in the work), between inner sensations and outer environment. I begin to sense, to become conscious of, my body and of the environment we are sharing in the very moment of producing the work.

As Gomes points out in his essay, for the filming of *KnowingUnknowing* our desired aspiration was to experience the work as a one-off phenomenon, a single moment in our shared, creative expressions. This ethical position led to our decision to reject second takes, post-performance editing or any post-production of the work. Taking the definition of the word improvise from the Latin, *improvisus* (in its tripartite composition), *im* is a form of negation, *pro* is a form entailing a time prior to or before, and *videre* means 'to see'.<sup>19</sup> Working on this basis, we accepted not seeing, not knowing ahead of time what was going to occur. We thus made a decision to accept whatever that journey might bring in the present moment. That decision was tested during the last section of the work when Dwyer's bow broke. I was not aware of what had occurred during the performance, nor was this captured on camera. However, I was alert to the new direction the music took. Radically altered; it shifted from the tremolo bowing fragments that started that movement to a kind of unbearable screeching (we later discovered this was created by Dwyer's fierce rubbing of the guitar's body with the aid of rosin). Accepting the journey and whatever that might bring, I experienced this new, unexpected shift within the musical environment I had hitherto been responding. When Dwyer picked up the broken bow (again, not captured on camera) and swung its loose disheveled hairs while accentuating his breathing rhythmically, I

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<sup>17</sup> Lisa Nelson, 'Fragment of a tuning run', *Contact Quarterly*, (2006) vol.39. no. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> João Cerqueira Da Silva Junior, 2017. *Reflections on Improvisation, Choreography and Risk-Taking in Advanced Capitalism* (Helsinki: University of the Arts, 2017).

knew we had arrived in new territory. Improvising. Performing. Making the work in the moment of its performance, of its reception, we committed to *KnowingUnknowing*.

(Helen Kindred)

### ***KnowingUnknowing and the Improvising Mise-en-scène***

In the ensemble improvisation and recording of *KnowingUnknowing*, I used and applied a range of operative strategies as part of its creation. These bespoke conditions and frameworks for the improvisation demanded a specific approach to recording, and influenced the role and use of the camera. These were agreed strategies to allow me, as camera operator, to move freely between performers, which additionally relieved any requirement to 'document' the work as a whole. A standard formal approach for documentation might commonly employ a tripod-based static, wide shot. While this allows for the description of the entire performance or action, it is often achieved at the expense of visual detail.

In addition to these operative strategies, a testing and agreement of maximum proxemic conditions for each performer in relation to the camera was undertaken. This agreed limit was beyond what might usually be considered practical in recording live performance, but it allowed me to gain significantly increased intimacy with the performers. In theory, proxemic limits determine specific spatial boundaries. However, in practice, considering the speed and unpredictable movements of the improvising dancer combined with the improvised movements and responses of the camera, I had to re-negotiate constantly, on a moment-by-moment basis these proxemic and spatial conditions throughout the entire piece.

*KnowingUnknowing* had a well established pre-existing three-part structure, but the addition of a camera as part of the ensemble, and the agreed integration of the recording as part of a shared improvisatory process, represented a significant extension to the entire work and effectively changed it from a duet to a trio for the duration of the recording. The frameworks set between the ensemble included the application of improvisatory strategies and processes between *all* participants, including the camera and its operation. These encompassed the establishment of proxemic conditions, the agreement that the performers would not engage directly with the camera lens, and the aspiration to record only one take. The limitations that these frameworks imposed included the following: one person functioning as director-as-camera operator; the particular spatial conditions of the studio; the constraints and possibilities of the specific camera technologies; the sonic relay of music with amplification; the physical movement of performers; and the psychology and rhythm of the performers.

Significant elements in this process included the augmented visual 'offers' via the camera, the emergent visual compositions in the camera frame and the effects of light. Using an application that records in high-contrast black and white, which directly gives an instant image of the ongoing recording and movement, also allows me to improvise adjustments in exposure of the images, generating distinct changes in their luminosity and contrast. These recording decisions were aimed at eliminating later adjustments, such as post-production techniques and manipulation of the final recorded artifact; they further helped me generate a sense of immediacy during the live act of recording.

Despite the improvisatory strategies we employed in *KnowingUnknowing*, the camera framing in the project drew on many stylistic conventions—performers were kept in the frame at all times, and compositional balance was sought for during continual camera movements. However, the lightness and flexibility of the camera allowed me a freedom of movement that articulated working improvisatory processes and visual offers between the performers, and enabled rhythmical responses within the same conditions and constraints.

This improvisatory approach of the director-as-camera operator resonates somewhat with the ideas of the French filmmaker and anthropologist, Jean Rouch:

...the only way to film is to walk with the camera, taking it where it is most effective and improvising another type of ballet with it, trying to make it as alive as the people it is filming. I often compare it to the improvisation of the bullfighter in front of the bull. Here, as there, nothing is known in advance.<sup>20</sup>

In *KnowingUnknowing*, the recorded live act of improvisation is not a performance presented for the camera or mediated by the camera; rather, the camera and its operation become participatory elements within it. The *mise-en-scène* is therefore constructed in conjunction with the camera and operator and performance. The improvising camera and the improvised composition of the recorded frame become the locus and coalescing mechanism for the improvised event. Being director-as-camera operator, I function under the same improvisatory strategies and processes as the performers, creating a conflation of improvisation across performance and production. Improvisation and *mise-en-scène* appear to be contradictory concepts. However, Edgar Langraf's description of improvisation as a 'particular mode of staging' points towards the possibility and development of an improvisatory form of *mise-en-scène*; a way of working that encourages and facilitates improvisation in the context of film production.<sup>21</sup>

The negotiation and refinement of an improvising cinema practice develops a form of staging improvisation, by applying strategies that develop and shape new and visionary ways of making cinema. The *KnowingUnknowing* project becomes a stage in development towards refining and consolidating a practice, which we might describe using the oxymoronic term 'improvising mise-en-scène'.

If we examine these improvisatory practices from a New Materialist perspective (and specifically Karen Barad's Agential Realist ontology), such processes are reframed as a sequence of iterative 'intra-actions', where 'Intra-action signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies.'<sup>22</sup> The application of Barad's conception of agency, rooted in quantum physics, has significant implications for examining improvisatory practices, as 'agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has'.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in *KnowingUnknowing*, each participant's combined choices iteratively consolidate the unfolding improvised sequence, opening new ideas and possibilities and, importantly, effectively constraining others. These choices, within this cinematic improvisatory context, effect a visual coalescing of multiple intra-acting agencies shaping the recording camera frame, resulting in an improvised 'sequence shot':

intra-actions iteratively reconfigure what is possible and what is impossible—possibilities do not sit still. One way to mark this might be to say that intra-actions are constraining but not determining. But this way of putting it doesn't do justice to the nature of 'constraints' or the dynamics of possibility. Possibilities aren't narrowed in their realization; new possibilities open up as others that might have been possible are now excluded: possibilities are reconfigured and reconfiguring.<sup>24</sup>

This intra-action of entangled agencies is visible and tangible; and, it is productive of a specific material result: the unfolding recorded sequence shot. The intra-actions occur on and off camera; both preceding and subsequent to each, ongoing, recorded frame—a continual intra-twining between production and performance.

These multiple possibilities, constraints and conditions do not determine outcomes of this ensemble improvisation, but operate in a way that Barad describes as a 'material-discursive

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<sup>20</sup> Jean Rouch, *The Camera and Man*. In *Ciné-Ethnography*, (ed. trans.) Steven Feld (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), 38-39.

<sup>21</sup> Edgar Landgraf, *Improvisation as Art: Conceptual Challenges, Historical Perspectives* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 11.

<sup>22</sup> Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 33.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 234.

practice'.<sup>25</sup> The production of an improvised sequence shot is an entanglement of operative strategies, bespoke conditions during shooting and the shifting multiple agencies shaping its relational construction. This entanglement of strategies, and relational and performative unfolding, is a form of 'apparatus'. Within Barad's relational ontology, the definition of what constitutes an apparatus originates from consideration of quantum scientific practices.

I propose a crucial shift in understanding the nature of apparatuses: apparatuses are to be understood not as mere laboratory instruments, static instrumental embodiments of human concepts, but as open-ended and dynamic material-discursive practices.<sup>26</sup>

Barad's reconception of an apparatus positions it as operative and generative, describing it as being 'constituted through particular practices that are perpetually open to rearrangements, re-articulations, and other reworkings'.<sup>27</sup>

In *KnowingUnknowing*, therefore, I see apparatus as an enacted and ongoing continual reconfiguration of possibilities and closures, physical positions, and changing spatial, sonic and visual conditions. These intra-active entangled agencies, congeal within the frame but do not sit still; each moment opens new possibilities within the unfolding improvisation—a continual iterative re-configuration. This analysis extends the practices of improvisation within *KnowingUnknowing* across, and between, the camera and performers—combined improvisatory processes on both sides of the camera—what I like to call *intra-filmic*. It amplifies the relational practices in both production and performance *intra-filmically* on *and* off camera, inside *and* out of shot; the processes of improvised construction being an enacted apparatus, continually co-constituted and materialised within the recording frame.

(Pete Gomes)

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 203.